

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05335 01 OF 04 111810Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----080895 111813Z /44

O 111530Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9627

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 DAMASCUS 5335

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, SY, US, XF  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ASSAD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

REF: DAMASCUS 5318

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ASSAD'S RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S SEPTEMBER 7 LETTER, RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 11, WAS FORTHCOMING. HE SAID INTER ALIA THAT SYRIA WOULD CONTINUE TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION; THAT FUNDAMENTALLY -DESPITE PROVOCATIONS - SYRIA'S POLICY IN LEBANON IS ONE OF SELF-DEFENSE AND STANDFAST; AND THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF SYRIAN POLICY IN LEBANON REMAIN THE UNITY OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF LEBANON, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STOPPING OF FIGHTING. HE STRESSED THAT ALL ACTS OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCE, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER, ARE MOTIVATED BY CONCERN FOR THE UNITY OF LEBANON AND THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE LEBANESE STATE. HE PLEDGED THAT SYRIAN FORCES WOULD PRACTICE A MAXIMUM DEGREE OF SELF-CONTROL WHILE EFFORTS ARE BEING EXERTED TO HELP THE LEBANESE REACH A SOLUTION. THE REMAINDER OF THE LETTER IS A CATALOGUE OF THE SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS, HIGHLIGHTING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAMOUNISTS AND PHALANGISTS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 05335 01 OF 04 111810Z

IN BLOCKING RECONCILIATION OR REBUILDING THE NATIONAL ARMY. ASSAD CALLED ATTENTION TO THE ISRAELI ROLE IN ENCOURAGING THESE TWO GROUPS, AND URGED THE US TO EXERT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO STOP INTERFERING IN LEBANON. IN DELIVERING THE TEXTN THE PRESIDENCY HIGHLIGHTED ASSAD'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON SYRIA'S LEBANON POLICY IN GERMAN INTERVIEW (SEPTTEL), INCLUDING

SYRIA'S INTENTION TO WITHDRAW THE MINUTE THEY ARE REQUESTED TO BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, MOHAMMED DABBOUL, DELIVERED TO ME SEPTEMBER 11 PRESIDENT ASSAD'S RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S SEPTEMBER 7 LETTER ON LEBANON. THE RESPONSE IS FORTHCOMING. TEXT OF LETTER FOLLOWS.

TEXT

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. JIMMY CARTER  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 7, AND WHILE I SHARE YOUR CONCERN OVER THE SAD EVENTS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE IN THE SISTER COUNTRY OF LEBANON, I WOULD POINT OUT THE FOLLOWING:

1. SINCE THE VERY START OF CIVIL FIGHTING IN LEBANON IN APRIL 1975 AND UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF JUNE 1976, WE EXERTED GREAT POLITICAL EFFORTS TO STOP ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND TO RESTORE CALM AND STABILITY TO THE  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 05335 01 OF 04 111810Z

SISTER COUNTRY OF LEBANON. HOWEVER, THOSE POLITICAL EFFORTS IN WHICH OTHER PARTIES - ARAB AND FOREIGN - SOMETIMES PARTICIPATED FAILED AND THE CIVIL WAR CONTINUED: HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WERE KILLED DAILY, VILLAGES AND CITY QUARTERS WERE DESTROYED, THE STATE OF LEBANON COLLAPSED, THE ARMY AND THE SECURITY FORCES DISINTEGRATED AND PARTITION BECAME A FACTUAL THING AND THE TALK OF ALL PARTIES. INDEED, SOME OF THESE PARTIES MADE PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SETTING UP OF PETTY SECTARIAN STATES AND SYRIAN RECEIVED ONE MILLION LEBANESE REFUGEES.

2. TOGETHER THESE EVENTS PRODUCED GRAVE RESULTS WHICH THREATENED THE UNITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON AND THE INTEGRITY OF ITS TERRITORY. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE WAS SHATTERED INTO FRAGMENTS THAT FELL INTO THE HANDS OF VARIOUS PARTIES. IN THOSE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHILE THE FIGHTING WAS FAVORING ONE PARTY, WE REALIZED THAT THE CONTINUATION OF THE FIGHTING, THE IMBALANCE OF FORCES AND A VICTORY BY ONE PARTY OVER THE OTHER -- ALL THIS WOULD MEAN A DEFEAT FOR THE UNITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON AS WELL AS MORE VIOLENCE, BLOODSHED AND DESTRUCTION. THEREUPON, SYRIA ASSUMED ITS

NATIONAL AND BROTHERLY RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS LEBANON  
AND SENT UNITS OF ITS ARMED FORCES TO STOP FIGHTING,  
RESTORE PEACE, FOIL ACTS AIMING AT PARTITION AND  
MAINTAIN THE UNITY AND NATIONAL SAFETY OF LEBANON. IN  
THIS EFFORT, SYRIA CLASHED WITH PARTIES WITH WHOM WE  
HAVE POLITICAL AND EMOTIONAL TIES, INCLUDING THE  
PALESTINIANS. THE SYRIAN UNITS MADE USE OF SOME OF THE  
MEANS AVAILABLE TO THEM TO STOP THE FIGHTING AND TO  
MAINTAIN THE NATIONAL BALANCE IN LEBANON, NOTWITH-  
STANDING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS PRODUCED ON US BY  
THIS USE. BUT WE REGARDED THE INTERESTS OF LEBANON AND  
THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO ITS TERRITORIES MORE IM-  
PORTANT THAN THE SUFFERING, BURDENS AND LOSSES WE  
ENDURED. THUS, FIGHTING WAS STOPPED AND PEACE WAS  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 DAMASC 05335 01 OF 04 111810Z

RESTORED TO ALL PARTS OF LEBANON.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05335 02 OF 04 111936Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----081435 111939Z /41

O 111530Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9628

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 4 DAMASCUS 5335

NODIS

3. DURING THE PERIOD OF CALM WHICH FOLLOWED, WE  
TRIED TO MAKE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PLAY A MORE  
EFFECTIVE ROLE IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND  
BUILDING UP A NATIONAL ARMY WHICH ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE  
OF ALL PARTIES, BECAUSE IT IS NATIONALLY CONSTITUTED  
AND BECAUSE IT OWES ALLEGIANCE ONLY TO THE STATE AND  
NOT TO ARMED FACTIONS OR TO LEADERSHIPS PRODUCED BY  
THE CIVIL WAR. WE DID THIS IN THE BELIEF THAT A  
COUNTRY'S ARMY SHOULD SYMBOLIZE THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

OF ITS CITIZENS AS WELL AS THEIR DESIRE FOR PEACE AND STABILITY. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, NO PART OF ALL THIS COULD BE EFFECTED BECAUSE THE FALANGISTS AND THE CHAMOUNITES PLACED OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF THE ENDEAVORS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, COMMENCE A NATIONAL DIALOGUE, FORM A COUNCIL OF MINISTER EMBRACING ALL PARTIES, RESORE THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE AND IMPOSE ITS AUTHORITY IN ALL LEBANESE TERRITORIES. IN ADDITION TO REJECTING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY WHOSE UNITY HAD BEEN SHATTERED BY THE CIVIL WAR, TTEY TIED UP THE MAJORITY OF ITS OFFICERS AND MILITRY PERSONNEL WITH THE "MILITERE CVOUNCIL OF THE LEBANESE FRONT" AND THEREBY PREVENTED THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON AND HIS GOVERNMENT FROM TAKING ANY EFFECTIVE MEASURES RELATED TO THE ARMED FORCES. THEY FURTHERMORE RESORTED  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 05335 02 OF 04 111936Z

TO ALL MEANS TO ACHIEVE THEIR AIM - INCLUDING THEATS OF MORDER AND TERROR - AND DID ALL THIS SO THAT OFFICERS OF THE ARMY WOULD SERVE THEM AND WOLD NOT SERVE THE STATE OF LEBANON.

4. DURING THAT PERIOD WE DISPLAYED A MEASURE OF TOLERANCE AND FLEXIBILITY BEYOND BELIEF. WE DID THIS IN THE HOPE THAT TIME WOULD PERSUADE THE DEVIATING PARTIES TO GO BACK TO THE RIGHT PATH AND TO RESTORE TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AND AUTHORITIES USURPED BY THEM. IN FACT THEY HAVE BEEN EXERTING AUTHORITY TO LEVY TAXES, CONTROL EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES AND COMMIT INCREDIBLE ACTS OF BRUTALITY AGAINST CITIZENS IN THE AREAS OVER WHICH THEY HAVE IMPOSED THEIR AUTHORITY. THE FALANGISTS AND THE CHAMOUNITES WHO PERFORMED THESE ACTS ADOPTED PARTITION SLOGANS SUCH AS "SELF-ENSURED SECURITY" IN THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY HAVE OVERTHROWN THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF LEBANON.

5. THE TWO PARTIES OF THE FALANGISTS AND THE CHAMOUNITES WERE ENCOURAGED BY ISRAEL' INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND PARTICULARLY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. YOU RECALL IN THIS REGARD, I AM SURE, THE ISRAELI INVASION OF SOUTHERN LEBANON AND THE PART PLAYED BY ISRAEL IN PREVENTING THE EFFECTIVE RESTORATION OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF LEBANON THEREIN AND IN BARRING THE ENTRY OF A LEBANESE ARMY UNIT INTO THIS AREA, THEREBY VIOLATING SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS NOS. 425 AND 426. IN FACT YOU KNOW BEST THE DETAILS OF THE ISRAELI INTERVENTION.

6. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, ISRAELI

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 05335 02 OF 04 111936Z

INTERVENTION HAS BECOME MORE EVIDENT: ARMS AND MILITARY AID ARE BEING SENT TO THE FALANGISTS AND CHAMOUNITES, WHO ARE URGED TO PROCEED WITH THEIR PARTITION POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND INSTIGATED TO COMMIT PROVOCATIVE ACTS AGAINST THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES, INCLUDING THE SYRIAN FORCES. THIS GREAT PROVOCATION, HOWEVER, WAS LAUNCHED ON FEBRUARY 8 OF THIS YEAR, WHEN SOME MILITARY ELEMENTS MADE AN UNEXPECTED ATTACK ON A PATROL OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES, KILLING A NUMBER OF ITS MEMBERS, SUCCESSIVE PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES FOLLOWED, AND THE FORCES WHICH ARE THE INSTRUMENT OF THE LAWFUL AUTHORITY IN LEBANON HAD TO RESORT TO SELF-DEFENSE AND TO STICKING TO THEIR POSITIONS WITHOUT MOVING OVER ANY TERRITORY IN THE HOPE THAT THOSE WHO CHALLENGE THE UNITY, SAFETY AND STABILITY OF LEBANON WOULD ULTIMATELY RETURN TO THE RIGHT PATH.

IN FACT PROVOKING THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES WAS NOT THE LIMIT FOR THEM. FOR THEY WENT SO FAR AS TO COMMIT CRIMES OF MURDER IN ORDER TO RID THEMSELVES OF THE POLICIES OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS OPPOSED TO THEIR OWN POLICIES AND PRACTICES. SUCH WAS THE CASE OF THE MURDER OF THE LATE TONI FRANJIEH, A FORMER LEBANESE DEPUTY AND MINISTER AND THE SON OF PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANJIEH, A FORMER PRESIDENT OF LEBANON.

7. LAUNCHING ATTACKS AGAINST THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES AIMS TO PUT AN END TO ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF LAWFUL AUTHORITY IN LEBANON INASMUCH AS THOSE FORCES, IN ADDITION TO BEING THE ONLY FORCE OF THE LAWFUL AUTHORITY IN LEBANON ACCEPTABLE TO THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE, CONSTITUTE THE ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF IMPOSING LAW AND ORDER. THIS EXPLAINS WHY THE ISRAELIS PERSIST IN INSTIGATING ARMED GROUPS TO CLASH WITH THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 DAMASC 05335 02 OF 04 111936Z

8. BY VIRTUE OF THE NATURE OF THEIR MISSION, THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER IN LEBANON. ALL ACTS WHICH THEY HAVE CARRIED OUT IN LEBANON AND THOSE WHICH THEY WILL CARRY OUT ARE MOTIVATED BY

CONCERN FOR THE UNITY OF LEBANON AND THE CONTINUED

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05335 03 OF 04 112028Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----081716 112035Z /70

O 111530Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9629

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 4 DAMASCUS 5335

NODIS

EXISTENCE OF THE LEBANESE STATE. I AM SURE, MR.  
PRESIDENT, YOU AGREE WITH ME THAT IF A ARMED GROUP  
WERE TO VIOLATE PUBLIC ORDER AND THREATEN THE  
SAFETY AND SECURITY OF CITIZENS IN AN AMERICAN CITY,  
IT WOULD BE THE PRIMARY DUTY OF THE AMERICAN SECURITY  
FORCES TO HASTEN TO DEFEND LAW AND PUBLIC ORDER  
WITHOUT AWAITING A SPECIFIC ORDER, THE ACT BEING  
OF THE VERY ESSENCE OF THEIR TASKS AND DUTIES.

9. IN THIS CONNECTION, REFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE  
TO THE CAMPAIGN CURRENTLY BEING LAUNCHED BY THE  
ISRAELI INFORMATION MEDIA ON THE SUBJECT OF AN  
ALLEGED LIQUIDATION OF CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON. I VERY  
MUCH WISH THAT IN RELATION TO THIS CAMPAIGN YOU  
WOULD RECALL THE ACTS AND PRACTICES OF ISRAEL AGAINST  
THE PALESTINIANS - CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS ALIKE.

WHEN THE CHRISTIANS WERE HARD PRESSED IN THE CIVIL  
WAR IN LEBANON, SYRIA ALONE ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR RELIEVING PRESSURE AND RESTORING BALANCE  
TO THE LEBANESE ARENA.

I HOPE YOU ARE NOT UNAWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE  
OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS ARE  
OPPOSED TO THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE PHALANGISTS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 05335 03 OF 04 112028Z

AND CHAMOUNITES, AS HAS BEEN DECLARED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF THEIR LEADERS. MOREOVER, THE CHRISTIANS LIVING IN THE AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES ENJOY EXCELLENT CONDITIONS OF LIFE. IF THE WHOLE QUESTION WERE

SECTARIAN IN NATURE, WHY IS IT, IT MAY BE ASKED, THAT FIGHTING BREAKS OUT ONLY IN A LIMITED SECTION OF BEIRUT?

THE FACT IS THAT THE CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON, LIKE THE MUSLINS, ARE OPPOSED TO THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE PRACTICED BY THE PHALANGISTS AND CHAMOUNITES WITH ISRAELI INSTIGATION. THEY ARE ALL IN FAVOUR OF THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY AND OF RESTORING THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE TO ALL PARTS OF LEBANON.

10. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED HERE THAT THE TALK NOW BEING CARRIED ON BY THE ISRAELIS AND ZIONISTS CONCERNING ALLEGED PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS - WHO CONSTITUTE PART OF OUR NATION AND CANNOT BE SUBJECTED TO PERSECUTION BY ANYONE - IS REMINISCENT OF THE EUROPEAN PRACTICE IN THE 19TH CENTRY - WHICH IS NOW PART OF HISTORY - OF USING THE PRETEXT OF THE PROTECTION OF MINORITIES IN ORDER TO COVER INTERVENTION IN SOME AREAS AND TO IMPOSE EUROPEAN COLONIALISM.

A MORE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS THAT THIS TALK WILL LEAD THE ISLAMIC WORLD TO TALK ABOUT THE FATE OF THE MUSLIMS OF LEBANON, CONSIDERING THAT LEBANON, BY ITS VERY SOCIAL STRUCTURE, CONSISTS OF SEVERAL SECTS AND COMMUNITIES. SUCH TRENDS, MR. PRESIDENT, WILL SURELY LEAD TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 DAMASC 05335 03 OF 04 112028Z

UNITY OF LEBANON, WHICH IS A MATTER OF THE UTMOST SIGNIFICANCE TO ALL THE CITIZENS OF LEBANON.

11. WHILE THANKING YOU FOR THE LETTER IN WHICH YOU EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE PRESENT SITUATION IN LEBANON - A CONCERN WHICH I SHARE WITH YOU, I BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES CAN GREATLY HELP THE SISTER STATE OF LEBANON BY EXERTING PRESSURE TO MAKE THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT STOP ITS INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND DISCONTINUE THE MILITARY, MATERIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT WHICH IT GIVES TO SOME ARMED GROUPS - A SUPPORT THAT ENCOURAGES ACTS WHICH CONTRADICT WHAT BOTH OUR GOVERNMENT HAVE DECLARED CONCERNING THE SECURITY,

PEACE, SOVEREIGNTY AND UNITY OF LEBANON. MOREOVER, A  
DECLARED AMERICAN STAND IN THIS DIRECTION, WOULD  
CONSTITUTE A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION.

UNDOUBTEDLY, A CONTINUATION OF THE ISRAELI  
ATTITUDE CONSTITUTES A FACTOR THREATENING THE SECURITY  
OF THE REGION.

12. IN CONCLUSION, WOULD REAFFIRM THE OBJECTIVES  
OF OUR POLICY IN LEBANON, NAMELY THE UNITY OF THE  
LAND AND PEOPLE OF LEBANON, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE  
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STOPPING OF FIGHTING.  
ACTING ON THESE PRINCIPLES, THE SYRIAN FORCES IN  
LEBANON PRACTICE A MAXIMUM DEGREE OF SELF-CONTROL,  
WHILE EFFORTS ARE BEING EXERTED TO HELP THE LEBANESE  
GOVERNMENT BY ATTEMPTING TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION

ACCEPTABLE TO THE VARIOUS PARTIES AND BY TAKING  
MEASURES CONDUCIVE TO MAINTAINING SECURITY, UPHOLDING  
THE AUTHORITY OF THE LAW AND SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRY'S  
UNITY AND INTEGRITY.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 05335 04 OF 04 112050Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----081835 112052Z /75

O 111530Z SEP 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9630

S E C R E T SECTION 4 OF 4 DAMASCUS 5335

NODIS

SYRIAN IS AS DESIROUS TO PROTECT THE SAFETY OF  
THE CITIZENS OF LEBANON, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIAL  
OR POLITICAL ADHERENCE, AS THAT OF ITS OWN CITIZENS.  
THEY ARE ALL OUR BROTHERS FOR WHOSE SAKE WE HAVE  
ENDURED A GREAT DEAL OF SUFFERING, BURDENS AND  
SACRIFICES.

WITH BEST REGARDS AND WISHES,



HAFEZ AL-ASSAD  
PRESIDENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1978

END TEXT

2. COMMENT: DABBOUL SEEMED VERY PLEASED WITH THE CONTENTS OF PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD'S LETTER, OBVIOUSLY BELIEVING THAT THEY WERE RESPONSIVE TO THE POINTS MADE BY OUR PRESIDENT IN HIS LETTER. AFTER READING THE LETTER, I SAID I WAS GLAD TO SEE THAT PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD HAD ALLUDED TO "EFFORTS BEING EXERTED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT...TO REACH A POLITICAL SOLUTION." AS HE KNEW, WE FELT VERY STRONGLY ABOUT THIS, BELIEVING THAT FURTHER MILITARY ACTIONS WOULD ONLY COMPLICATE THE  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 DAMASC 05335 04 OF 04 112050Z

SITUATION IN LEBANON AND RISK ESCALATION. THE SITUATION IS VERY TENSE AND UNLESS SYRIA EXERCISES CAUTION, THERE IS THE EVEN PRESENT DANGER OF IRAELI INTERVENTION. DABBOUL ECHOED THE STANDARD SARG POSITION THAT THE SYRIAN ARMY IS MERELY REACTIVE TO PROVOCATIONS.

3. I THEN REMINDED DABBOUL OF OUR PROPOSAL THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT REITERATE PUBLICLY ITS ULTIMATE INTENTIONS IN LEBANON, INCLUDING AN EVENTUAL TROOP WITHDRAWAL. DABBOUL ENTHUSIASTICALLY SHOWED ME A COPY OF THE DAILY NEWSPAPER AL-BATH IN WHICH ASSAD WAS QUOTED IN A GERMAN INTERVIEW AS NOT ONLY REITERATING SYRIA'S "HONORABLE" INTENTIONS IN LEBANON BUT ALSO AS SAYING THAT SYRIAN FORCES WOULD WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON THE MINUTE THEY WERE REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

4. ASSAD'S TWO PUBLIC INTERVIEWS SEPTEMBER 9 AND 11 (SEPTEL) CONSTITUTE FURTHER CLEAR STATEMENTS OF SYRIAN INTENTION TO WITHDRAW. STATEMENTS SPECIFICALLY COUNTER CHARGES THAT SYRIAN SEEKING BY ITS ACTIONS IN LEBANON TO UNDERCUT CAMP DAVID, IGNORE THE POPULAR WILL IN LEBANON, OR IMPLEMENT DREAM OF "GREATER SYRIA."

5. BELIEVE, AS DABBOUL IMPLIED, THAT THESE STATEMENTS ARE A DIRECT RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR PUBLIC STATEMENT ON INTENTION TO WITHDRAW.

6. SUGGEST DEPARTMENT PASS TO BEIRUT AND TEL AVIV.  
SEELYE

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESIDENT, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CAT-B  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 sep 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978DAMASC05335  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** P850061-1998  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** DAMASCUS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780983/aaaacqlg.tel  
**Line Count:** 492  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 56697053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Page Count:** 9  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** 78 DAMASCUS 5318  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 30 jun 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1489137  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESIDENT ASSAD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER  
**TAGS:** PEPR, PPDC, SY, US, XF, (CARTER, JIMMY), (ASSAD, HAFIZ AL)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/56697053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014